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THE ELEMENTS
OF
PAINTING IN OIL.

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THE
H A N D - B O O K
OF THE
E L E M E N T S
OF
PAINTING IN OIL,



WITH AN APPENDIX

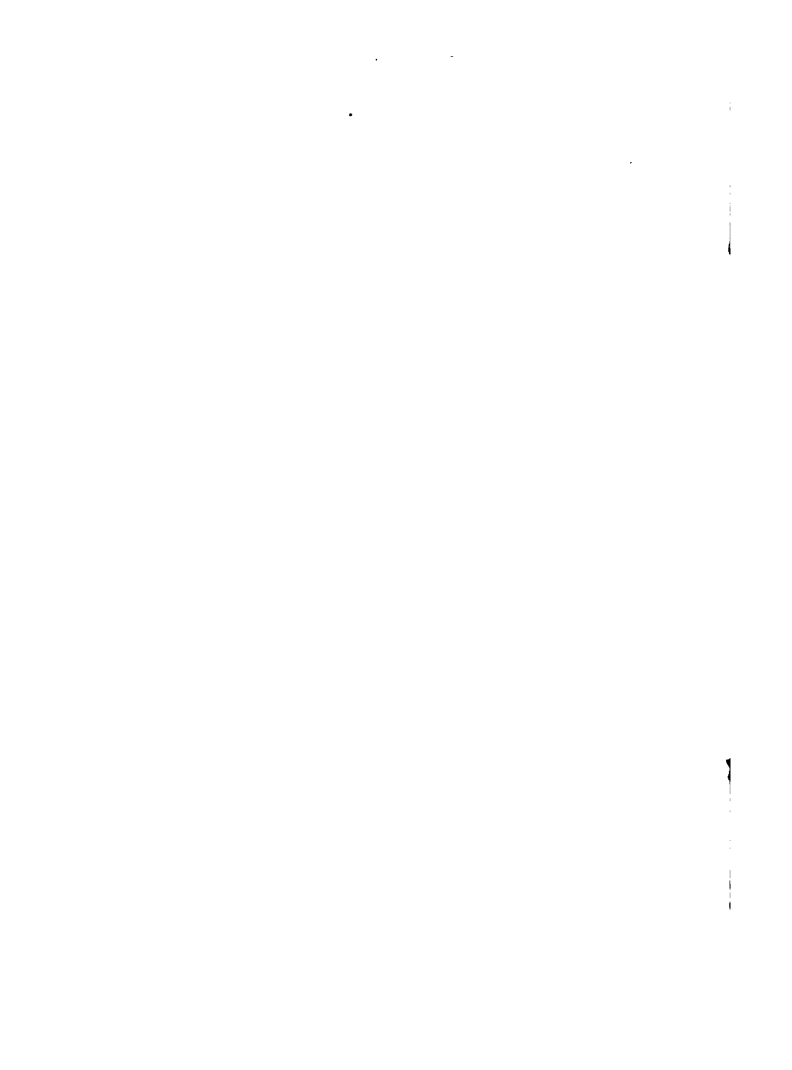
CONTAINING SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS' OBSERVATIONS
AND INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS.

"Indocti discant, et ament meminisse periti."

LONDON :
CLARKE AND WILSON, 66, GUY BAILEY -

1842.

36.



DEDICATION.

TO

MR. MAURICE DUNN,

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN

OF THE RESPECT AND HIGH ESTEEM

IN WHICH HE IS HELD

AS AN ARTIST AND A FRIEND,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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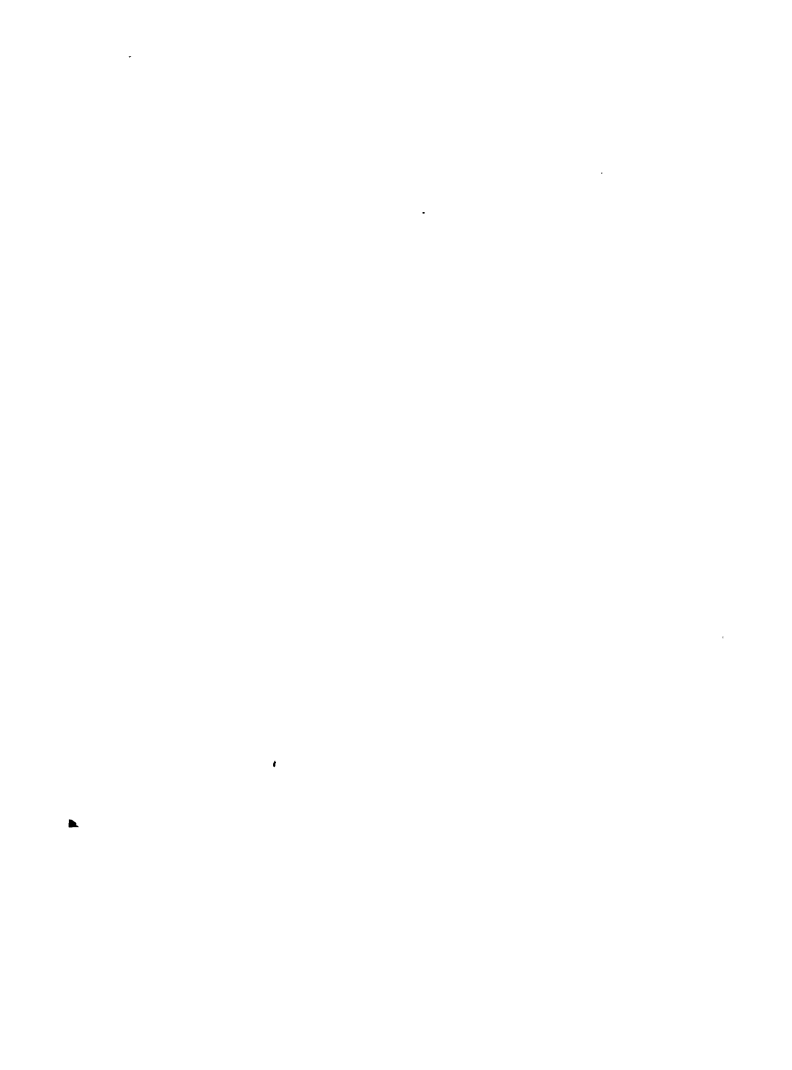


THE ELEMENTS
OF
PAINTING IN OIL.

years previous to the study of their works, to have been occupied in grounding their readers in the first lines of art ; or, at all events, if this be not their belief, they make no provision for those who seek the A. B. C. of the artistical alphabet.

The absence of such a work as above described, at once concise and perspicuous, was severely felt by us at the commencement of our noviciate, and believing that there are many, whose tastes would lead them to become artists, either professionally, or as a means of employing the hours of relaxation from severer study or labour ; but who—solely for the want of an Instructor to inform them, where and how to set about laying the first stone of a structure, which might perchance, “ become the admiration of all beholders,”—permit that taste to wither with their youth ; or, commencing with the so called elementary instructors in the art, find

after years of diligence and labour, that they have advanced but slightly, or perhaps have retrograded, and by beginning at L. have found themselves, at the conclusion of their studies, at D. whereas, had they learned the Alpha-Beta of the art, they might at least have been on the high road to the Omega of it. We have endeavoured to supply this desideratum, and to place within the reach of the youthful mind, the means of attaining a proficiency in the divine art; which, with assiduous attention, and a close application to the study of nature, in its ever varying hues and forms; may earn for him, perchance, an undying celebrity.



The Art of Painting in Oil.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Oil Painting is an art, by which we transfer to canvas or other prepared surface, the objects of the material or ideal worlds ; either in colors or simple black and white ; and either singly, or in numbers, or groups ; and is divided into several kinds, according to the manner, subject, and materials of representation ; the principal of which are Historical, Portrait, and Landscape painting ; the first of these is divided into Sacred and Profane ; and again subdivided into the grand, ornamental, and familiar styles, according to the subject or the treatment of it.

The early history of Oil Painting is yet involved in much obscurity and doubt, though the untiring research of the present century has done much to divest it of the darkness and uncertainty which has veiled it for four hundred years; and it is now the general belief, that Van Eyck may be considered, not only the inventor, but a successful, and for the age in which he lived, an exceedingly clever practitioner of the art: but as a knowledge of who is the inventor of this or that art, will do little towards perfecting any one in the practice of it, we shall proceed at once to the rudiments, first premising that, a knowledge of drawing, and for historical painting, of anatomy also, is indispensibly necessary to success.

CHAPTER II.

REQUISITE MATERIALS.

Many artists maintain that learners should prepare the canvas or other surface for their own painting ; this we consider an erroneous idea, inasmuch as it is a rule about which there can be little controversy, that, instruction should partake, as much as possible, of the character of recreation, and that instruction so conveyed is more firmly impressed upon the mind, than that conveyed in any other way ; therefore we would remove from the young artist all appearance of drudgery, and permit him to purchase the requisite materials ready prepared for use, at an artist's repository of note.

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 general belief that Van Dyck may be considered,
 not only the greatest, but a successful, and for the
 sake of which he lived, an exceedingly clever prac-
 titioner of the art: but as a knowledge of who is
 the master of his contemporary, with the little towards
 everything we see in the practice of it, we find
 myself at once in the millstone. First genuine
 is a knowledge of drawing, and for history
 of painting is necessary also, which possibly necess-

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pure the names of the great
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invention of it and the use
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and that intention is to
improved upon the work
any other way, therefore we
young artists and designers
have very particular ideas about
the use of materials

Those who adopt the plan just recommended,
will require the following articles,

An easel—a square one is to be preferred

A palette, of walnut or other close grained wood

A palette knife of steel

A ditto of ivory

An earthenware cup for oil,

A tin vessel for turpentine, somewhat similar to
a soap dish.

A tin can with turpentine

A marble slab or grindstone

A glass muller, for the colors liable to undergo
any change or be impaired in working with the
steel palette knife.

A mahl stick or rest for the hand when painting

Canvas on stretchers, or panels, of various sizes

Hoghair tools, various sizes

Fitch Pencils, ditto.

Sable Pencils, various sizes

Softeners, two sizes

A bottle of boiled, linseed, or drying oil

A ditto nut oil

A ditto poppy oil

A bladder of each of the following colors,

Nottingham White	Indian Red
Flake White	Light Red
Naples Yellow	Brown or Dutch Pink
Yellow Ochre	Raw Umber
King's Yellow	Burnt Umber
Scarlet Lake	Vandyke Brown
Madder Lake	Prussian Blue
Vermillion	Ivory Black

and a pot of Megilp.

PREPARATION OF COLORS.

For the convenience of those who may prefer grinding their own colors, we subjoin a list of those

required in lump or powder, distinguishing between those which should be ground in boiled and nut, or poppy oil.

* Nottingham White	* Madder Lake
* Flake White	* Carmine
§ Naples Yellow	* Brown or Dutch Pink
§ King's Yellow	‡ Raw Umber
† Yellow Ochre	‡ Burnt Umber
† Light Red	‡ Vandyke Brown
* Indian Red	† Prussian Blue
† Vermillion	† Ultramarine
* Scarlet Lake	‡ Ivory Black

Those marked thus (‡) should be ground in boiled linseed oil, to the consistency of honey, until they lose all granular appearance and become perfectly smooth.

Those marked thus (*) should be ground in like manner in nut oil.

Those marked thus (†) should be ground in like manner in poppy oil.

Those marked thus (§) should be ground in like manner, in equal parts of nut and poppy oil.

NOTE.—Naples Yellow and King's Yellow require to be ground with the muller and removed from the slab with the ivory palette knife, as the steel one will spoil the brilliancy of both.

An excellent megilp may be made in the following manner:—to a gill of boiled linseed oil, add two thirds of a gill of mastic varnish, shake them well together, and suffer them to remain in a cool place until the whole becomes coagulated, it may then be taken on the palette as required.

CHAPTER III.

PREPARATION OF CANVAS AND PANELS.

Notwithstanding what we advanced at the commencement of the last chapter, we doubt not, many will be anxious to prepare their own canvas or panel, or to know how it should be done, and therefore, to accommodate our book as much as possible to differing tastes, we shall set apart this chapter to instruct them in priming as it is termed.

The methods of preparing canvas or panel are two; the first, and it is usually considered to be the best, is, having procured a stretcher or frame of wood of the size of your intended picture, strain over it a piece of canvas, (russia duck or ticking is the best,) taking special care that the

tension is perfectly equal in every part, and fasten the canvas on to the frame with small tacks as the straining is carried on. This done, take whiting ground and finely sifted, and enough clean size to make it of the consistence of putty, place them in a pipkin and set them over a fire, keeping them stirred till thoroughly mixed,—they should not be suffered to boil,—take it off, and when of the warmth of new milk, spread it with your palette knife evenly over the surface of the canvas; this will dry speedily, and thence the roughness or irregularities should be rubbed down with a smooth faced pumice stone; after this lay on another coat of the whiting and size, which while yet moist, rub with the hand occasionally moistened with cold water, and when the entire surface is dry, the canvas or panel (for the process is applicable to both) is fit for use.

The second method, and though inferior the one in general use, is a mixture of spanish white, tobacco pipe clay, and a slight colouring of red lead, with as much water as will form the whole into a mass, which should be well ground till it be free from grit, to this add boiled linseed oil in sufficient quantity, and spread over the canvas or panel as directed with the first method, and when dry pumice it to a smooth surface..

CHAPTER IV.

ON CHOICE OF SUBJECT.

We have now brought our young artist to the commencement of his picture, and it behoves us to say a few words on the kind of painting or subject to be first treated by him. Most persons commence with a head or portrait, and for this reason, that that which they have most constantly in their sight, and with which the eye has become most familiar, they are likely to make a more correct representation of than any other: this is undoubtedly the case, and therefore is it unquestionably the best subject to begin with, for the young artist elated with the success of his first.

essay will be spurred on to further efforts, when an entire failure might cause him to relinquish the hope and even the thought of ever becoming a painter ; and for another reason is the study of the human head and figure the most preferable for a learner, should he at an after period of his life acquire a taste for landscape painting, his early study of human nature will enable him to introduce figures into his pictures, with more correct expression and consequently greater effect than if he had made landscape painting his first study.

Therefore presuming that a portrait or copy of a head will be the subject of his first attempt, we shall at once give the necessary instructions how to proceed.

FIRST SITTING FOR A PORTRAIT.

Having made the drawing of the subject in outline on the canvas, and seen that it is in every

particular correct, paint in the dead coloring with hoghair tools, for which your palette must be laid with Prussian Blue, Indian Red, and Flake White, making out the shadows first as thinly and transparently as possible, with a tint composed of the three mixed for a dark complexion to a purple hue, and for a fair one to a grey, carefully marking the forms of the features, &c. this completed, take a tint of Indian Red and White a little lighter than the complexion and put in the lights, soften them into the shadows with a badger hair tool, and finish this stage of the painting by laying over such parts of the shadows as may require it, a warm tint of Lake and Brown Pink.

SECOND SITTING.

The second stage should be commenced with a palette having in addition to the above three colors, Light Ochre, Light Red, Vermillion, and Scarlet

Lake; the two first having two tints beside them of the color mixed with white to different shades, the third having three tints also mixed with white and other tints composed in the following manner;

Red tint—Lake and half Vermillion

Green tint—Light Ochre and Prussian Blue and White

Blue tint—Prussian Blue or Ultramarine and White

Grey tint—Ivory Black and White

then match the red and yellow tints carefully to the complexion, and afterwards the blue ones, laying in the lights with a full pencil; this will complete the second sitting.

THIRD SITTING.

Preparatory to commencing the third sitting, it will be necessary to go over the face with a soft tool and clear poppy oil, wiping it off immedi-

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A likeness is at all times more striking by the strength of the lights, inattention to this rule causes many otherwise well painted pictures to appear flat and unfinished.

Hair is painted with three tints, light, middle, and shade ; having painted the whole of the hair with the middle tint which should be matched to the color, mark the shadows strongly with the shade tint and glazing, and lastly put on the lights firmly with a small hoghair tool.

CHAPTER V.

ON BACKGROUND.

The background is by no means an unimportant part of a picture, as on its judicious introduction, subject, and treatment, much of the effect of the picture depends, but as opinions differ widely on the subject, no rule can be laid down as to what is or is not propriety, the young student must therefore be guided by his own taste and judgment.

For painting them generally, it will therefore be necessary to lay your palette with the following tints

Black, White, and a little Indian Red

Black and Indian Red

Brown Ochre and White

White, Raw Umber, Black, and Indian Red

The dark side of the head is the one on which it is customary to commence painting in the background, which should be done with hoghair tools and a shade tint of Indian Red and Ivory Black, proceed round the head slightly increasing the depth of the shade to the light side, and uniting it with the subject so as not to appear hard or sudden against any part of it, and lay on the dead coloring of the drapery if it is intended to introduce any ; let this dry, and then proceed to glazing the shadows, and painting in the landscape free, transient, and light, making it faint to give it the effect of distance, that the figure may stand out more prominently, and soften and blend the whole with a badger hair tool.

CHAPTER VI.

ON DRAPERY.

As the rules which are applicable to painting white satin are applicable in the same degree to every other color, and generally to every kind of drapery, except black satin—which we shall notice further in its proper place : we shall here only give directions for painting white satin, adding afterwards a list of the different colors and tints required for different colored satins,—remembering that in white satin the lights are the color, and in colored satin the middle tint should be.

Three tints are all that are requisite for the first painting of satins or draperies, viz. white, middle,

and shade tints, the middle tint being equally between the shade tint and the white.

First paint in the lights with a full pencil in their proper places, then take the half shade or middle tint and mix with it one half more white, and shape the lights as they appear in the subject, taking special care that this lies clearly and distinctly between the light and middle tints; next fill in the shadows with the shade tint, and go over the parts between the first tint and the shade with the middle tint. **NOTE.**—The shadow should be painted as thinly and clear as possible.

When this is dry the drapery is finished by adding the high lights and the reflects, the painting of which require great care and judgment, and before commencing them you should well consider what part of the drapery is capable of reflecting there that reflection will fall,

It is requisite also to observe that in painting satins and velvet each tint should be kept clear and not blended with the adjoining one, but in painting other draperies this remark will not apply so generally, as they for the most part require the shadows to be softened into the lights to give the folds the appearance of roundness.

TINTS FOR WHITE SATIN.

Lights—Flake White

Middle Tint—White, Black, and a little Indian Red

Shadows—Black, White, and Indian Red

Reflects—Indian Red and White, or Brown Ochre and White, or Ultramarine and White

BLUE SATIN.

Lights—Prussian Blue and White

Middle Tint—Ditto to match the color of the satin

Shadows—Ivory Black, Prussian Blue, and a little White

Reflects—Brown Ochre mixed with the light tint

CRIMSON OR SCARLET SATIN.

Lights—Light Ochre, Light Red, and White

Middle Tint—Indian Red and Lake

Shadows—Indian Red, Lake, Vermillion, and a little Ivory Black

Reflects—Vermillion and Light Red

YELLOW SATIN.

Lights—King's Yellow and White

Middle Tint—Light and Brown Ochre, White, and a very little Black

Shadows—Brown Pink and Burnt Umber

Reflects—Light Ochre and Light Red

GREEN SATIN.

Lights—Prussian Blue, King's Yellow, and Brown Pink

Middle Tint—Prussian Blue, Brown Pink, and a little King's Yellow

Shadows—Prussian Blue and a very little Brown Pink

Reflects—Prussian Blue and Brown Pink

BLACK SATIN.

Lights—Light Red

Middle Tint—Lake, fine White, and Ivory Black

Shadows—Brown Pink, Lake, and Ivory Black

Reflects—Brown Ochre, Lake, Brown Pink, and Black

It will be remembered that in our general directions for painting satins and draperies, that we excepted black satin, the method of painting which differs materially from that employed with other satins, inasmuch as the rules laid down for them are nearly reversed.

First paint and glaze the shadows to keep them

~~Shades~~—~~Very Black~~. Prussian Blue, and a
little White

~~Shades~~—Brown Ochre mixed with the light tint

~~SHADES OF SCARLET SATIN.~~

~~Shades~~—Light Ochre, Light Red, and White

~~Shade Two~~—Indian Red and Lake

~~Shades~~—Indian Red, Lake, Vermillion, and
a little Very Black

~~Shades~~—Vermillion and Light Red

~~SHADES OF SCARLET.~~

~~Shades~~—Light Yellow and White

~~Shade Two~~—Light and Brown Ochre, White,
and a very little Black

~~Shades~~—Brown Pink and Burnt Umber

~~Shade Two~~—Light and Light Red

~~SATIN.~~

~~Shades~~—Light Yellow, and

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transparent, then with Black and a little Lake put in the deepest shades, fill in the rest with the middle tint, and finish by carefully touching on the lights and reflects.

Velvet should be painted in the same manner as satin, with a light, middle, and shade tint, observing that when it appears tightened across a body or an arm, and the light is diffused equally over the entire picture, the lights of the velvet fall where the shadows appear in satin.

Linen must be painted with the same tints as white satin, merely observing that as the same effect of brilliancy and gloss is not required, the lights should not be so sudden or quite so bright.

Black stuffs as Barristers' or Clergymen's gowns require only black and white.

No specific directions can be given as to the positions of light and shade in draperies, as the

slightest alteration in a single fold will displace and change all the other lights and shadows, it must therefore form a part of study, and the effect produced by the various positions and folds of draperies of all kinds in different lights should be carefully copied and re-copied to impress it on the memory, but it is at all times preferable to paint dresses from the wearer if you have the opportunity of doing so.

CHAPTER VII.

LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

In addition to the colors used in portrait painting, it will be necessary to have Chrome Yellow, Raw Sienna, Burnt Sienna, and Antwerp Blue for landscapes.

Having first correctly sketched or washed in your design with Burnt Umber ground with boiled linseed oil and thinned with turpentine, faintly, and with as much freedom as you are master of, leaving the canvas for the lights, let it dry, and when dry in the following manner.

DEAD COLORING.

Commence with the sky from the top of the picture, painting with a hoghair tool and a full body of color, the tint for skies in general is Prussian Blue, Ultramarine, White, and a little Light Red, (without the introduction of the last the sky will not accord with the hue of nature,) making the tint gradually paler towards the horizon, by mixing it with more white and a little Yellow Ochre. Next fill in the clouds using a tint of white and Indian Red, and leave them in a condition for finishing.

For sunny skies or sunsets, Lake, Vermillion, Indian Red, and Chrome Yellow are requisite, but in using the latter care must be taken that too much of it is not blended with the blue tint, or the effect will be a *green* sky.

The extreme distance is the next part to be

dead colored, with the same tints which are used in the sky and the shading of the light clouds, making out the forms with a trifle more strength than you employed upon the clouds.—Remember the objects in the extreme distance must not be too clearly defined, this part of the picture must show rather the general character of objects than the distinct outlines of form.

Then proceed to the middle distance, painting it with a tint of Black, White, Indian Red, Lake, and Yellow Ochre, make out the forms in this more strongly and distinctly than in the extreme distance, and in the foremost part of the middle distance the natural colors of objects may be faintly and sparingly laid on, and though this more properly belongs to the second stage of the painting, it may be done with great and good effect in the first coat.

The foreground is the last part of the dead coloring of a landscape. Begin with the tops of your trees, laying in your color thinly and transparently, more particularly towards the edges, the tints employed in dead coloring trees and foliage are

Lights—Prussian Blue and Yellow Ochre

Middle Tint—Prussian Blue and Brown Ochre

Shadows—Brown Ochre, Burnt Sienna, and Prussian Blue

and for the edges and light and transparent branches, Brown Pink and a little Prussian Blue. It will of course be necessary to vary these tints according to the description of trees and the period of the year, as we find foliage in spring and early summer green, and in autumn brown. Trunks and branches of trees, stones, broken earth, and whatever else your foreground may be composed

of (except figures), should then be painted in, leaving the parts which were uncovered in the sketching for the lights; the most natural tint for earth is white, black, and a little Indian Red or Brown Ochre, except where local circumstances require it otherwise.

The remark which we made above concerning the various hues of foliage of different kinds, at different seasons, is applicable also to the trunks and branches of trees, but the following tints will include all that are necessary for painting them and any other foreground object, not foliage.

Yellow Ochre, Light Red, and a little White

Brown Ochre and Light Red

Black, White, and Light Red

. Burnt Sienna and Prussian Blue

The dead coloring is now completed by painting in the figures, so that they will only require the

shadows glazing, and the addition of the high lights in the finishing.

FINISHING A LANDSCAPE.

The finishing is commenced by oiling the surface lightly, and wiping it off with a piece of old silk—improve the middle tints, strengthen the shadows of the trees and other parts of the foreground, and lastly touch in the high lights with a free and correct hand.

Should the picture be a sunlight one, the shadows of objects on which the sunlight falls should be of a cool blueish grey tint, which is not only the color of the natural object, but considerably increases the brilliancy of the lights.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

In the foregoing pages will be found one or two professional terms which require some explanation for the proper understanding of them, these and a few maxims of essential service to be remembered by those whose intention it is to make painting their study, will conclude this—truly a labour of love for the divine art.

Glazing.—The intention of glazing pictures is to give a natural and agreeable mellowness to the execution of the work, and is never rightly performed except when it gives to the picture the effect of colored varnish.—MERIMEE.

It is performed principally with the transparent colors ground very finely with clear oil and megilp.

Scumbling.—Is a somewhat similar operation with the opaque colors, ground so thick as to prevent their admixture with or running into the adjacent colors.

Reflects.—The reflects are the parts in the shadows of the drapery which appear lighter or of a different hue from having the light reflected on them by other parts of the same or surrounding objects.

MAXIMS,

When you leave off painting always turn your picture with the face towards the easel, placing the bottom of it at the extremity of the pegs, to prevent its incurring any injury from dust, &c.

Cleanse your pencils, slab, palette, and palette

knives thoroughly, with turpentine, at the close of each day's sitting.

In using oil be careful that it is clean and free from any other color than the one you are about to use, or the delicacy of your tints will be spoiled.

Do not assume a freedom by laying on your color in lumps, but wait till you have learned that essential to natural effect.

When you cannot finish any part of a picture to the satisfaction of your eye, obliterate the part and paint it over again.

Be cautious in the use of pure colors, and remember that nature in her gaudiest attire rarely displays color in an unmixed state.

Be not discouraged by a failure, but rather rejoice that certain errors and faults are pointed out by it, to avoid which is to succeed.

APPENDIX.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS' OBSERVATIONS ON
COLORING, PORTRAIT PAINTING, &c.

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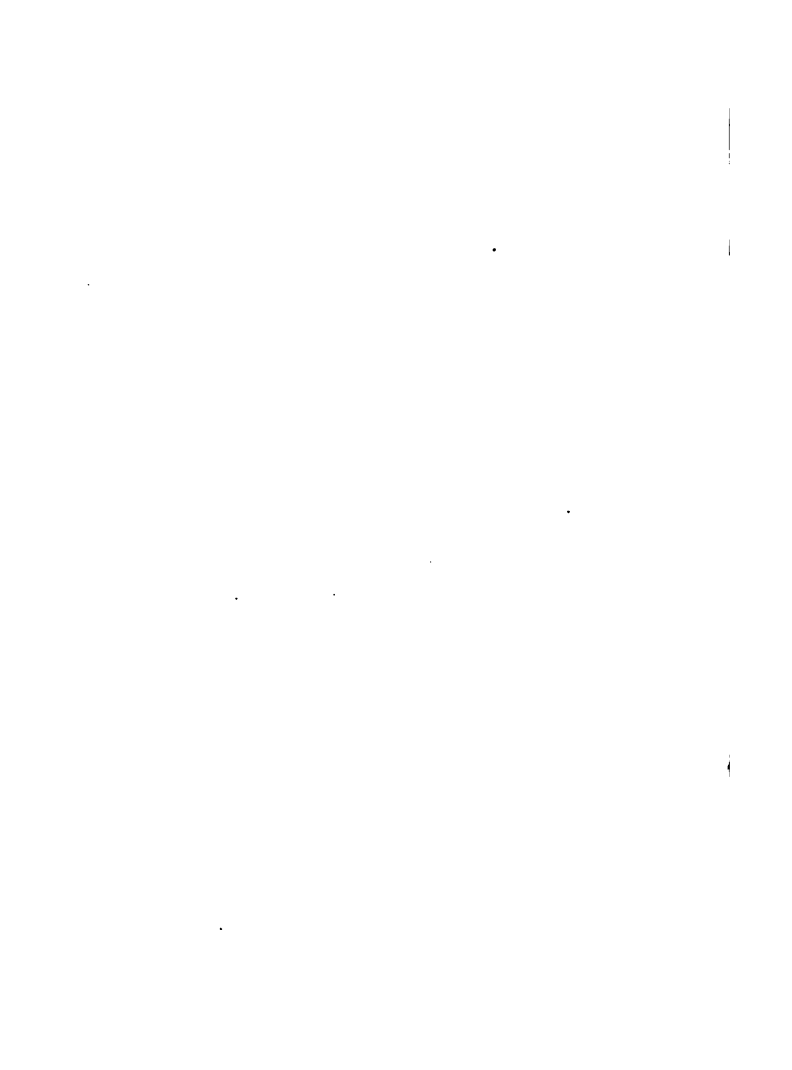
When you cannot finish any part of a picture to the satisfaction of your eye, obliterate the part and paint it over again.

Be cautious in the use of pure colors, and remember that nature in her gaudiest attire rarely displays color in its unadorned state.

Do not forget to keep your palette and brushes clean, and to wash your hands after re-

APPENDIX

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS OBSERVATIONS ON
COLORING. PORTRAIT PAINTING &c



APPENDIX.

To preserve the colors fresh and clean in painting ; it must be done by laying in more colors, and not by rubbing them in when they are once laid ; and if it can be done they should be laid just in their proper places at first, and not be touched again because the freshness of the colors is tarnished and lost, by mixing and jumbling them together ; for there are certain colors which destroy each other by the motion of the pencil when mixed to excess.

For it may be observed that not only is the brilliancy as well as freshness of tints considerably

impaired by indiscriminate mixing and softening ; but if colors be too much worked about with the brush, the oil will always rise to the surface and the performance will turn comparatively yellow in consequence.

Never give the least touch with your pencil until you have present in your mind a perfect idea of your future work.

Paint at the greatest possible distance from your sitter, and place your picture occasionally near to the sitter, or sometimes under him so as to see both together.

In beautiful faces keep the whole circumference about the eye in a mezzotinto, as seen in the works of Guido and the best of Carlo Maratti.

Endeavour to look at the subject or sitter before you, as if it was a picture ; this will in some degree render it more easy to be copied.

In painting, consider the object before you, whatever it may be, as made out more by light and shadow, than by lines.

A student should begin his career by a careful finishing and making out of the parts, as practice will give him freedom and facility of hand; a bold and unfinished manner is generally the habit of old age.

Let those parts which turn or retire from the eye be of broken or mixed colors, as being less distinguished and nearer the borders.

Let all your shadows be of one color; glaze them till they are so.

Use red colors in the shadows of the most delicate complexions, but with discretion.

Contrive to have a screen with red or yellow color on it to reflect the light in the sitter's face.

Avoid the chalk, the brickdust, and the char-

coal, and think on a pearl, and a ripe peach.

Avoid long continued lines in the eyes, and too many sharp ones.

Take care to give your figure a sweep or sway, with the outlines in waves, soft and almost imperceptible against the background.

Never make the contour too coarse.

Avoid also those outlines and lines which are equal, which make parallels, triangles, &c.

The parts which are nearest to the eye appear most enlightened, deeper shadowed, and better seen.

Keep broad lights and shadows, and also principal lights and shadows.

Where there is the deepest shadow, it is accompanied by the brightest light.

Let nothing start out or be too strong for its place.

Squareness has grandeur ; it gives firmness to the forms, a serpentine line in comparison appears feeble and tottering.

FINIS.

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